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## INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Viet Minh and Lao Issara Training Camps in Kengtung State

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1. A Vietnamese military training camp is located about four kilometers northeast of Mong Lin, near the road leading to Keng Lap (20°50'100°28'), at the junction of two small rivers.
2. About 60 Vietnamese, mostly men, live in the camp. All of the Vietnamese came from Thailand by way of Mae Sai. Access to the camp by local people is quite free, but it is a somewhat risky undertaking for an outsider to attempt to enter the camp.
3. The Vietnamese camp has been in existence for nine months and is commanded by the Can-bo, Tran Quang Ho\*. The training course varies from three to six months.
4. The chief of all the Vietnamese in Kengtung State is Nguyen Van Long (Le Van Long). The Regent of Kengtung, Sao Khunsuek, seems to be unaware of any especially close connection between Long and the camp at Mong Lin.
5. Along the west bank of the Mekong, both north and south of its little tributary, which passes through Mong Lin, there is located a large community of Lao Issara. They apparently live by farming, fishing, and catching crocodiles.
6. Under the leadership of Prince Souphanavong, the Lao Issara establishment, consisting mostly of men, is conducting an intensive program of military training. The number of men in training varies from 100 to 600. They are well supplied with arms. These include French muskets, American rifles, pistols, carbines, submachine guns, machine guns, and horse-carried antiaircraft machine guns.

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7. The Regent of Kengtung and Prince Souphanavong are on good terms. The Regent sees no reason to interfere with the Prince's activities, since they are directed against the French, not the Shans.

8. Souphanavong travels frequently between Bangkok and Kengtung State, usually making the trip from Bangkok to Lampang by plane, and from Lampang to Kengtung State by bus. [redacted] Souphanavong was in Bangkok. 25X1C

9. During Souphanavong's absence from Mong Lin, general command of the Lao Issara camp is in charge of Bounyawatt, 44 years old, a former official in the office of the Viceroy of Laos.

10. The Lao Issara camp near Mong Lin has been in existence since 1945, but about nine months ago it was reorganized and expanded. Unless one is a Lao Issara, it is extremely dangerous to venture anywhere near the camp. The highway between the Thailand - Shan States frontier and Mong Lin is constantly watched by Lao Issara patrols. Any potential intruder is kidnapped by the Lao Issara.

11. Lt. Vixien\*\* is in direct charge of military training at the Lao Issara camp. 25X1X

\* [redacted] Comment. It appears that Tran Quang Ho is the Can-bo Chinh-tri (political commissar) of the Vietnamese camp. 25X1A

\* [redacted] Comment. Lt. Vixien may possibly be Capt. Vichien reported [redacted] dated 3 June 1948. This report states that a Captain Vichien, formerly a Sergeant in the Thai Army, was one of 20 Free Laotians with the Chinese Nationalist Army in Kunming. In April 1946, it was reported that Vichien was sent to Chungking by the Lao-tian government to enlist the aid of the Chinese government on the side of the Laotians in their struggle against the French.

[redacted] Comment. Vixien appears to be a French Romanization of a fairly common Thai and Lao name of Pali origin. The Thai version is pronounced "Wi-chien". 25X1X

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